

## African fountain grass *Pennisetum setaceum*



### The problem

African fountain grass has been widely planted as an ornamental in Australia and overseas. African fountain grass is a garden escapee and native to drier parts of northern and eastern Africa and south-western Asia. It is a highly invasive, fire-adapted colonizer that readily out-competes native plants. It increases the intensity and spread of fires, resulting in severe damage to native dry forest species. African fountain grass produces large numbers of wind-dispersed seeds, its spread could be rapid and almost impossible to prevent.

### Description

African fountain grass is an erect, densely-tufted perennial which grows to 1 m tall. Leaf blades are linear, convolute, folded or flat mostly 8–30 cm long. The florescence (seed head) is a pink, feathery spike, 10–25 cm long and 1.2–1.6 cm wide. It is a perennial plant that may live for up to 20 years. Flowering occurs over a prolonged period from spring through summer. Evidence from Hawaii where it is also weed, suggests that seeds may survive for more than six years in the soil seed bank. Most seeds germinate in late spring through to early summer.

## Management strategies

African fountain grass is spread through humans moving plants. Wind, moving water and seeds attached to fur and vehicles. Revegetation of the cleared area should be pre-planned to ensure that other weeds then do not gain a foothold in the disturbed area, include mulching to keep weeds down.

### For small plants or small infestations

Seedlings and smaller plants can be hand-pulled, bagged and composted or disposed of at the local garbage dump. Wear gloves, as the leaves and seed heads can cause skin irritation

### For larger infestations

Chemical control, such as foliar spray, may be required for larger infestations of African fountain grass.

## Declaration details

African fountain grass is a declared Class 3 plant under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*. The Act prohibits the supply or sale of Class 3 plants and may require their removal from environmentally significant areas.

## Further information

Further information is available from the vegetation management, weed control or environmental staff at your local government office.

**TABLE 1 – HERBICIDES REGISTERED FOR THE CONTROL OF AFRICAN FOUNTAIN GRASS**

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Comments
Pastures, non-crop situations and rights of way	Glyphosate (360 g/L) present as ipa/mas (e.g. Weedmaster® Duo)	10 ml / 1 L water	Spot spray only. Apply to actively growing plants
		6 L/ha and replant	In areas where pasture is being re-sown
	Glyphosate (540g/L) present as K salt (e.g. Roundup PowerMax)	33–66 ml/10 L spot spray	Refer to label for specific instructions

Read the label carefully before use and always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.